

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 AID-05 /085 W

----- 062237

R 050859Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1156

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 15474

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RP, LY

SUBJECT: STATUS OF GOP-MNLF NEGOTIATIONS

REF: (A) CAIRO 13398, (B) SECDEF P050041Z OCT 76,
(C) TRIPOLI 1234, (D) MANILA 13667 AND PREVIOUS

1. WE STILL CANNOT CONFIRM THAT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PHILIPPINES AND REBEL MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF) WILL TAKE PLACE IN TRIPOLI. SUBJECT AROSE DURING LATE AUGUST VISIT TO PHILIPPINES OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE REPS, INCLUDING LIBYAN UNDERSECRETARY AL-TREKI. ACCORDING MALAYSIAN SOURCE, PHILIPPINES ACCEPTED LIBYAN OFFER TO HOST RENEWAL OF GOP-MNLF TALKS WHICH HAD ENDED IN STALEMATE AT JIDDA IN JANUARY 1975.

2. ALTHOUGH REPORTS OF IMMINENT TALKS IN TRIPOLI HAVE CONTINUED TO CIRCULATE WITHIN MANILA DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY, THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN CLEARLY CONFIRMED BY GOP. ROMULO TOLD AMBASSADOR ON SEPTEMBER 7 THAT TALKS NOT DEFINITE AND THAT SUBJECT WOULD BE DISCUSSED
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FURTHER WITH LIBYAN REPS AT UNGA. LIBYAN ANNOUNCEMENT

OF SEPTEMBER 22 THAT GOP-MNLF TALKS WOULD BEGIN
SEPTEMBER 29 (REF C) WAS NEVER CONFIRMED (OR DENIED)
BY DFA.

3. CONFIDANT OF DEFENSE UNDERSECRETARY BARBERO (WHO
WOULD BE LOGICAL HEAD OF GOP NEGOTIATING PANEL) TOLD
POLCOUNS OCTOBER 5 THAT BARBERO WILL LEAVE ON MISSION
TO MIDDLE EAST (COUNTRY UNSPECIFIED) WITHIN THE NEXT
TWO WEEKS, PROBABLY NOT UNTIL AFTER OCTOBER 16 REFERENDUM.
WE ALSO HAVE REPORT FROM DEFSEC ENRILE PARTY IN WASHINGTON
(REF B) THAT GOP WILL MEET BEGINNING OCTOBER 10 WITH
MEMBERS OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (I.E. NOT NECESSARILY
WITH MNLF OR WITH MNLF ALONE) TO WORK OUT SOLUTIONS
TO "MORO PROBLEM". (VENUE NOT MENTIONED.)

4. COMMENT: APPARENT CONFUSION SURROUNDING SUBJECT
SUGGESTS THAT MISUNDERSTANDING MAY HAVE OCCURRED DURING
AL-TREKI VISIT, OR THAT PHILIPPINE SIDE MADE LOOSE
COMMITMENT TO TRIPOLI NEGOTIATIONS AND IS NOW TRYING
TALKS. ROMULO AND OTHERS AWARE THAT HOSTIL LIBYAN
VENUE IS FAR FROM IDEAL (AMONG OTHER FACTORS GOP DOES
NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH GOL AND WOULD
PRESUMABLY HAVE NO SECURE COMMUNICATIONS).

5. FOR CAIRO: RE REF A, SUGGEST YOU TELL LILAGAN THAT
GOP HAS MADE NO ANNOUNCEMENT RE TALKS, THAT VALIDITY OF
SEPTEMBER 22 LIBYAN ANNOUNCEMENT IS ALREADY DISPROVEN,
AND THAT RENEWAL OF DIRECT GOP-MNLF NEGOTIATIONS IS,
AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, NOT YET CERTAIN.
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